1; Jenness--191
116, 791

(1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo

"The mediators and intercessors between the living Eskimos and the supernatural world of shades and spirits are the shamans, angatkut. Mr. Stefansson has given an admirable account of their methods among the Mackenzie river Eskimos, and much that he says of the natives there applies also to the Copper Eskimos.(1) But the ideas and practices of the eastern natives are much less definite and precise, just as their religious beliefs are far more hazy and indeterminate. Accordingly, despite some necessary repetitions of Mr. Stefansson's remarks, it will be better to give a full description of shamanism as it is known and practised in the regions around Coronation gulf."

"1. My Life with the Eskimo, Ch. XXVI; Anthrop. Papers, A.M.N.H., Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 126 et passim."

1: Jenness--191-192 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 787, 775

"A shaman's powers are due to the control he presumably exercises over certain spirits, which are either the spirits (the shades?) of certain animals or the shades of the Eskimo dead. One or two shamans were reputed to control also certain white men, but whether it was their shades or their living powers was never stated; in any case they were remote enough to count as dead. The familiar spirit is called either tornrak or tupilek, usually the former; the word keyugak, which is the usual term in the Mackenzie delta, seems to be unknown, and even tupilek may be a borrowed word, although I hardly think so. A shaman inspired or possessed by his familiar is said to onipkaktok (which farther west means 'to tell a story') or tornraktok. The Copper Eskimo makes no sharp and definite destinction between the shades of the dead, the spirits that have never been men or animals, and the spirits that the shamans control; there are separate names for both the first and last; but all alike may be, and usually are, called tornrait.

Control over any familiar may be obtained by purchase, as I have mentioned elsewhere; Uloksak, for example, bought his power from a shaman in Bathurst inlet. This statement, however, is only partly true, for all that the owner can impart is his goodwill, and a knowledge of how to approach and summon the particular spirit that he has sold; the rest depends on the spirit itself. The aspirant must go out to some lonely place and summon the spirit, which may or may not appear. Sometimes, however, a spirit

will come to a man without being invoked, and tell him that henceforth it will accompany him everywhere and place its powers at his disposal. Thus Uloksak, after his purchase of certain spirits, used to go hunting all alone and summon them to come to him. For a time none came, then one day when he was alone on an island several appeared one after the other. They forbade him to eat any part of the stomach of the caribou, but to eat plenty of its brains; if he obeyed them in this respect they promised to attend him and bestow on him magical powers. After giving him these injunctions they knocked him roughly about and changed him into a white man. In this condition he returned to camp, where other shamans held a séance over him and restored him to his proper form. He then became one of the most noted shamans in the country.

The case of the old man Ilatsiak was very similar. He was fishing for tom-cod, all alone, when a spirit first appeared to him. It resembled a young man in appearance, and was accompanied by other spirits, but these Ilatsiak could not see. He was terrified when it approached him, and asked it whether he was going to die, but the spirit answered that he would live for many winters and reach old age before he died. It caught a tom-cod and made him eat it, and the [192] eating of this fish gave him magical power. The spirit accompanied him back to his camp, conversing with him, and giving him various injunctions; thus he was forbidden to eat the intestines of any animal, only the

meat and the fat. The spirit disappeared as soon as they reached the camp.

Higilak gained her power in very much the same way. Her father had been a shaman and had two familiar spirits. After his death these came to her one day when she was all alone in the camp. In appearance they resembled two men, and they told her that as they had attended her father in his life-time so now they would attend on her. She too was forbidden to eat of certain foods, in her case the stomach and the skin of the salmon, on pain of losing her magical power. The spirits then disappeared, and when the other Eskimos returned to camp Higilak was already holding her first séance.

As a rule the shaman's spirits are nameless, though the two that came to Higilak were called Kitafoa and Kingmitok. As their attachment to their owners is voluntary, so they can desert them at will. If the shaman for example should break the food prohibitions his familiars have enjoined on him they will leave him immediately. Such a fate befel a man in Coronation gulf quite recently, the natives said, when the people were feasting on the meat of a caribou that some one had shot. Two shamans, a man and a woman, began to hold a seance, but in the midst of it they drank a little of the blood of the deer, although this had been prohibited to them. The man's familiar immediately left him, and he lost all his shamanistic powers. The woman, whose name was Mittik, walked away towards the sun up the side of a ridge. Suddenly she disappeared into the ground, and a moment afterwards a dog sprang out from the same

spot; then the dog disappeared and the woman took its place again. This occurred three or four times in the sight of all the people, then finally Mittik walked back to the camp in her human form, but with her faculties impaired. Other shamans laid hands on her, and with the aid of their familiars restored her to her senses. (1)

How and where the familiars live, and what becomes of them after the death of their owners, the Eskimos never trouble to consider. They still continue to exist, for Higilak could inherit her father's familiars. Obviously it would redound to the credit and influence of an Eskimo if he could say that he had control over the same spirits as some famous shaman of earlier days, even though he himself never acquired the same reputed skill and power. The shaman's power, in fact, depends rather on his own personality than on the familiars he controls. A man of weak character who models his life on those around him and is easily swayed by public opinion never attains to any great repute as a shaman. On the other hand a shrewd, strong-minded man, capable and successful in

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"1. Kaksavik, the Pallik (Hudson bay) shaman who visited our headquarters, was prohibited from eating the liver, the lungs and the pancreas of the seal."

all the ordinary affairs of life, a leader of public opinion rather than its servant, may easily attain to the greatest influence and be credited with the most extraordinary shamanistic powers."

1: Jenness--192-193
116, 791, 789

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

"Shamans always, or almost always, have more than one familiar. Uloksak claimed to have many, including a white man, a polar bear, a wolf and a dog. I never heard of any bird familiars; they do exist perhaps, but not often, for birds are unimportant in the economy of the Copper Eskimos and therefore attract but little attention. One of Higilak's familiars was the shade of a dead relative, but she had besides this a polar bear and a wolf. Some shamans assign different functions to different familiars, using one, for example, in cases of sickness, and another for producing an abundance of seals. In this way one might be ranked as more important than the rest; for instance the familiar that was used for seals might be regarded as of more service than the one used to drive out a disease. But this specialization of functions is neither necessary nor usual. Every shaman probably has a preference for some particular familiar, and [193] employs it more than the others he claims to control; for a certain amount of acting is necessary in shamanistic performances, and naturally a man may find one rôle easier than another."

1: Jenness--193-195 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 787

"According to the belief of the natives a shaman will often change his form and take on that of the animal by which he is possessed, or will assume at least some of its characteristics. (1) This metamorphosis may even take place in the presence of spectators, though sometimes it can occur only when the shaman is alone. Thus Ilatsiak said that when his grandmother was a child there was a shaman named Makettak who could change into a polar bear. He would bend down to the floor of the dance-house, resting his hands on the ground. Slowly his hands would change into polar bear's feet, then his arms become legs, and finally his whole body and head would assume the shape of the bear. In this state he would go out of the dance-house and visit the neighbouring houses, saying to the children in each as he entered, 'Stand up against the wall beside the door and then I shall not eat you.'

The natives have numberless stories of such transformations and believe implicitly in their truth. Higilak's father could change into a polar bear, but only when he was alone. Uloksak claimed the power of transforming himself into a white or a brown bear, a wolf and a white man. Ilatsiak's wife, who was a shaman like her husband, puts her

"1. In 1916, when Ilatsiak visited our station, he chose me as his associate in magic, because, as he asserted, I could change into any form I wished."

fingers into her mouth on one occasion; gradually her hands became the feet of a wolf, then her head and body began to change and finally only her legs remained human. Even Higilak, according to her daughter Kannayuk, had the same power; Kanneyuk had seen her change into a polar bear. I was present myself at one of her transformations, and in view of the interesting questions it raises regarding the psychology of these Eskimos, I shall describe the incident in detail. [194]

We were living at Lake Numikhoin, in the Colville hills, and had been considering the advisability of travelling to Lake Tahiryuak to look for the Prince Albert sound natives. Higilak accordingly gave a seance to discover whether we could safely make the journey there and back by sled before the snow melted. The seance was held about midnight (it was at the end of May, when the sun never sets below the horizon), and all the Eskimos save the little children gathered inside the tent. Higilak was sitting at the back, in a corner, and her husband Ikpakhuak was slightly in front of her, while I was sitting in the corner opposite Higilak. She began by delivering a long speech setting forward the whole question at issue. Suddenly she uttered cries of pain and covered her face in her hands. Dead silence followed for a few minutes, a silence that was only broken by an occasional remark uttered in a low tone by some one in the audience. Presently Higilak began to howl and growl like a wolf, then as suddenly ceased and raised her head, when, behold, two canine teeth, evidently a wolf's, were protruding one from each corner of her mouth.

She leaned over to Avranna and pretended to gnaw his head, then began to utter broken remarks which her audience caught up and discussed, though very little of them could be interpreted. Every now and then she had to put her hand up to her mouth to keep the teeth from falling out, and once she slyly pushed them right inside out of sight, pushing them out again a few minutes later. After about a quarter of an hour spent in this manner she suddenly broke out into cries of pain again and concealed her face in her hands behind Ikpakhuak's back. Then I saw her carefully drop one hand towards her long boot, into which she apparently slipped the teeth, for a moment later her face reappeared without them. This was the critical moment, the moment when the wolf's spirit inside her body gave its answer to the question at issue. A few broken words issued from her, uttered in a feeble falsetto voice that was almost inaudible. Her audience was bending eagerly forward drinking in every syllable. In about two minutes it was all over, and Higilak, after a few more cries of pain (the familiar was leaving her) followed by two or three gasps, resumed her normal bearing. The seance was now concluded, but some of the natives lingered for a few minutes to discuss the oracle that had been delivered to them. Higilak herself professed to be ignorant of it, for a shaman should not be conscious of utterances given under the inspiration of a familiar; accordingly she had to question some of the bystanders to find out what she had said. In speaking of this seance some time afterwards the natives stated as an incontestable fact that Higilak had been

transformed into a wolf.

To a critical and unsympathetic outsider it may seem that a seance of this type is simply a case of palpable fraud on the part of the shaman, and of almost unbelievable stupidity and credulity on the part of the audience. A little very amateurish ventriloquism, a feeble attempt at impersonation, and a childish and grotesque blending of the human and the animal, all performed in full daylight before an audience incapable of distinguishing between fact and fancy, between things seen and things imagined, or at least so mentally unbalanced that it reacted to the slightest suggestion and hypnotised itself into believing the most impossible things -- that perhaps is all there may seem to be in Eskimo shamanism. But let us examine its functions a little more closely and consider a number of other seances before we give our final judgment.

In the first place the Copper Eskimo shaman, whether man or woman, has no distinctive mark or dress of any kind, not even during the seances. (1) There is absolutely nothing in his appearance that would suggest to a stranger the possession of special

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"1. They differ from Mackenzie river shamans in this respect. See Stefansson, Anthrop. Papers, A.M.N.H., Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 366."

powers or functions. The shamans are not priests in any ordinary sense of the word. They may be of either sex, are self-appointed and act separately without forming a distinctive class or caste; further, they [195] perform at any time and in any place according to their fancy. No sanctity attaches to them, nor are they given special privileges. They resemble doctors rather than priests, doctors who give their services free in any public cause, but are paid for treating individuals. Thus the shaman receives no reward when he placates the spirits that cause the blizzards, or induces Kannakapfaluk to send the Eskimos plenty of seals; but if someone is ill and a shaman is called in he must be paid for his services, whether they are successful or not."

1: Jenness--195 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 787

"Let us take concrete instances of each of these points. There were eight shamans in Dolphin and Union strait during the winter of 1914. Three of these, Kimaiyok, Higilak and Arnauyuk, were women, the remaining five, Anauyuk, Agluak, Utugaum, Kuniluk and Kamingok, were men. Every one of them gave seances at one time or another and so testified to their possession of shamanistic powers; but for this nothing would have marked them off as different from the other natives. Ikpakhuak and Aiyallik, who were perhaps the two most influential men in the region, were neither of them shamans. In Coronation gulf, on the other hand, the two most influential men, Uloksak and Ilatsiak, were both shamans. Seances were held most frequently in winter when the concentration of the families in a single camp gave more intensity and fervor to social and religious life. The nights at this season are long and tedious, and the people seek distracion in the dance-house, where singing, dancing and drum-beating key them up to the proper pitch for religious or magical rites. Their religion is not dropped, however, with the winter, and seances may be given in the open air in broad daylight at any season of the year, and in any place. When we first entered the country our Mackenzie river native, Palaiyak, met the shaman Anauyuk hunting on the tundra. This was the first warning that any of the Copper Eskimos had received of our presence, so Anauyuk immediately went into a 'trance,' invoking his familiar spirit to find out whether Palaiyak and the

1: Jenness--195
116, 791, 754

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

"Like a doctor, too, the shaman may abuse his powers and employ them against the interests of the community. He then becomes a malefactor like any common murderer, and is liable to the same fate."

white men with him were friendly or not. (1) The same Anauyuk held a seance during a migration on December 19th, 1914, just at the commencement of the sealing season. It was concerned both with the supply of seals during the coming winter, and with the presence of white men in the country. Kimaiyok held another immediately afterwards, to discover the reason for a certain man's illness. Both of these seances took place in the open beside the sleds, with the natives standing in a ring around their shamans. Higilak held several seances in Victoria island during the spring and summer, some inside the tent, and some outside. In July, 1916, a native Tokalluak gave a performance beside the fishing creek near Cape Krusenstern. Clearly therefore the shaman is not bound by any restrictions as to time and place."

"1. Cf. Stefansson, Anthrop. Papers, A.M.N.H., Vol. XVI, pt. I, p. 252."

1: Jenness--195-196 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 755

"It was stated that the shamans are public servants to some extent, comparable to our doctors. Whenever anything goes wrong--the weather is unusually stormy, or seals are scarce, or a number of people become ill -- the shaman are asked or themselves volunteer to discover the cause and remove the evil. I have already mentioned how, in Bathurst inlet at the beginning of the sealing season they kill or drive away all the little spirits that live on the ice and would prevent the Eskimos from catching seals. In March 1915 Uloksak, who had just come from Coronation gulf, was asked by the Dolphin and Union strait natives to kill or drive away a certain evil spirit that was threatening to destroy them all; already, they said, one Puivlik and two Akulliakattak natives had died, and they feared that others might follow them. Uloksak's familiar, a [196] dog, drove the hostile spirit into a dance-house where the seance was taking place. One of the spectators -- for it was visible to the people -- said that it had the form of a human being, but was only about two feet high and had unusually long hair. Uloksak's familiar, though invisible, could be heard yelping inside the shaman's body. A long contest took place between the two spirits, but finally the dog drove the evil one outside the house and killed it in the snow. Thus the community was rid of its pest."

1: Jenness--196 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 754

"It was Uloksak who told me of a case where a shaman abused his power and brought disaster on his community. The story is fanciful, of course, but not without its significance, since the natives believed implicitly in its truth. A succession of blizzards one winter had prevented the Akulliakattak Eskimos from sealing, and reduced them to the point of starvation. Finally one of the natives died, and the shamans held a seance concerning the misfortunes that had overtaken them. Now Uloksak's father-in-law, who was one of the principal shamans in the settlement, had a grudge against the other people because they had killed one of his relatives, so with the aid of his familiars he knocked down one of the two poles that were erected by men in the earliest times to hold up the heavens. The sky fell, and many of the Eskimos were killed. The man then left the settlement and went east to Bathurst inlet. After he had departed the Akulliakattak shamans divined that the pole had been knocked down by some shades of the dead, so with the help of their familiars they erected it in place again."

1: Jenness--196 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 755

"In the examples just given the shamans' services are employed for the benefit or otherwise of the whole community; but they can be used to serve individuals equally well. Thus when Ikpakhuak had a headache one evening, Higilak divined over him. She borrowed my coat (attigi), rolled it into a bundle, and fastened her belt-cord around it. Then she summoned a shade into the bundle and asked it various questions, judging of the answers by the weight of the coat, 'Yes' if it seemed heavy to lift and 'No' if it seemed light. After a series of questions and answers she discovered that a dead sister-in-law of Ikpakhuak had bewitched him, so she appeased the wrath of the shade with soothing words until it promised to cease its baneful influence. This ceremony took place in Ikpakhuak's tent where there was no one present save himself and his wife. Lying in my sleeping-bag in a tent adjoining I could hear her questioning the bundle, but no one else was aware that she even intended to hold a performance. It is hard to believe that Ikpakhuak, who had lived with his wife for years, could have been deliberately deceived by her unless she was deceived herself at the same time."

1: Jenness--196-197 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 754, 791

"The same magic powers that the shaman normally employs for the benefit of his fellow-men can equally well be used against them. Two natives carried off the wife of Anauyuk's father and tried to ferry her across the Rae river in their kayaks, which were lashed together to enable the woman to lie across the bows; but by the power of his magic, Anauyuk's father made the kayak capsize and their occupants were drowned. Similarly Uloksak threatened to use his magic power against me because we ejected him from our station one day; he told his fellow natives that the next time I crossed over to their settlement at the Liston and Sutton islands he would make me stumble and fall every few yards. In the same way Anauyuk, who was refused admittance to our house because he had robbed one of our caches along the coast, threatened to deprive us of our strength and make us waste away and die. Two shamans who were holding a seance together at the Liston and Sutton islands in December 1915, announced that they would cause some of our party to fall over a cliff and perish, in revenge for some offence that we had given them. The women were forbidden to sew on the following day lest they should all perish, and the children were told not to play too long out of doors for fear that an evil spirit [197] might seize them. Of course, it is a dangerous thing for a shaman to let it be known that he practises witchcraft against his fellow-men, for some one is likely to end his career with a knife. It is often attempted, however, when the passion for revenge is strong enough to overcome the dictates of prudence.

I was told that rude human figures are sometimes made from the bark of the cotton-wood tree, ningok, and used in connection with magic; both the bark itself and the figure that is made from it are called kaisalluk. The shaman holds the figure in his hand and calls his familiar into it, then asks it questions. Sometimes, it is said, the fetish by its own might will clothe itself in clean white deer-skin garments, much whiter than any the Eskimos themselves ever wear. I believe that various ceremonies are carried out with it, for example, that it is sometimes stabbed with a knife, but my enquiries brought me very little information. I am not certain, therefore, whether the fetish served the purposes of legitimate magic or was used in connection with witchcraft. (1)"

"1. Cf. Nelson, p. 494."

1: Jenness--197-198 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 789

"The most extraordinary feats and miracles are ascribed to shamans when under the inspiration of their familiars. They swallow fire, fly through the air, change into animals, sink into the ground or water, kill and restore to life again and discover things that are hidden from ordinary sight. Once they were able to visit the moon, but the modern shamans have lost that power. On returning from a trip to Coronation gulf in March, 1915, I was handed a little note written by our Mackenzie river native Palaiy-ak describing what the shamans in Dolphin and Union strait had done in my absence. Translated it ran: 'I shall relate what I was told about the shamans. Well, a man cut off both his legs and his arms. While he was holding this seance the children were forbidden to go outside; if they went out they would die. Once he killed a strong man (who left the dance-house during the seance). He exchanged his familiar spirit with Uloksak (i. e., the two shamans sent their familiars into each other's bodies). Uloksak too forbade the children on pain of death to go outdoors while he was holding a seance. Some of the people were stricken with sickness (one of the patients was Uloksak's own wife Kukkilukak) and the shamans extracted some bones and worms from their bodies.' [198]

In May, 1916, two of our western Eskimos, both Christianized, witnessed a seance that was held by a woman at Tree river. Invoking her familiar, they said, she began to converse with it; feeble sounds issued in reply from the woman's stomach in which

the spirit was lodged. After a few minutes some of the natives told our two Eskimos to look out over the land. There, protruding above the ground, they saw two heads, a man's and a woman's, which appeared and disappeared several times, then finally disappeared altogether. Our Eskimos went over to examine the spot and found that the ground was all overturned. They fully agreed with the Copper Eskimos that it was the shaman who had caused the phenomenon.

Innumerable stories are current of the wonderful powers that the shamans possess, and no native entertains the slightest doubt as to the literal truth of every incident. I shall narrate a few of them as they were told to me by eye-witnesses, since they throw considerable light on the mentality of the people.

Not many years ago, it was said, a certain shaman used often to fly through the air. He would hang his bow on his left shoulder and fly off like a ptarmigan. After a few yards he would settle and walk along the ground for a short distance, then rise in the air again. The people had often witnessed this. Ilatsiak was frequently credited with the same power, but he denied it himself, saying that he was not a bird. It is curious that I never saw or heard among these Eskimos of the so-called spirit flights, in which the shaman, after being lashed from head to foot, sets free his soul and travels through

the air, finally returning to his body and releasing it from its bonds.(1)"

"1. See Boas, Bulletin A.M.N.H., Vol.. XV, p. 491; and Bur. of Ethnol, Vol. 6, p. 594."

1: Jenness--198-202 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 787

"Ilatsiak was dangerously ill while he was yet a boy, and all the professional attentions of the shamans failed to cure him. At last they told him to go outside and die, but instead of dying he recovered. Clearly the spirits favoured him, so he became a shaman, the most celebrated one in the country. While he was still but a youth he summoned some white men, who made their appearance in the dance-house before the astonished eyes of all the Eskimos. Maffa, a Tree river native who served us for a year, told us how Ilatsiak once threw a line out into the passage leading into the dance-house and roped in a number of spirits, tornrait. Maffa peered down through the door and saw them all in the passage. Ilatsiak spoke to them, but his language was strange, and all that Maffa could understand was that he was telling them to protect the people and to banish all sickness from their midst.

Ilatsiak's powers were derided by his cousin, who was also a shaman, so Ilatsiak clapped his hands and fire shot up from the floor. His cousin, nothing daunted, went outside and disappeared down a squirrel hole, re-emerging again from the ground a long way off. In the same way, the natives said, Ilatsiak himself once sank down through the snow floor of the dance-house, growing smaller and smaller till he vanished from sight altogether. A few minutes later he came up through the floor of another hut right beside some men who were sitting on the sleeping platform. Uloksak could remember

when he was a boy how white men had appeared in the dance-house at Ilatsiak's command. The people sent Uloksak outside, and when he went back again he was amazed to see that Ilatsiak had cut off a leg and an arm and thrown them to the back of the hut. He was sent out once more, and when he re-entered Ilatsiak was whole again. Uloksak even claimed to have done the same thing himself at one of his seances.

Ilatsiak was a prudent old man and never boasted of his miracles. He asserted that he was totally unconscious of his actions when inspired, and only learned of them afterwards from the spectators; hence he was not able himself to guarantee the truth of everything that was said about him. We noticed that he always listened with an air of detachment to the tales of all his miracles [199] as though they concerned someone else. On one occasion, his kinsmen told me, he and three other shamans gave a seance together. The four men held their hands behind their backs and stretched out their necks, holding their mouths wide open. Gradually their teeth changed to polar bears' teeth, then as gradually changed back again. On another occasion when two Netsilik shamans were terrifying the people by driving their knives through their stomachs so that the points protruded from their backs, Ilatsiak went into an empty hut alongside, changed himself into a polar bear, and, going back into the dance-house, so frightened the two Netsilik men that they fled from the settlement. On still another occasion Ilatsiak had sunk down through the floor of his hut into the sea below without

making even a hole in the ice. Another Bathurst inlet shaman had once remained five days and five nights under the water, wetting only his ankles and a small spot on his back.

Uloksak, having lost his seal-spear one day in a seal-hole, went home and summoned his familiars; the latter immediately made the spear come up through the floor of his hut. A still more remarkable story is told of Ilatsiak's younger brother. His wife lost her knife in the fall of the year, and in the following spring her husband resolved to find it. Going inside his hut he disappeared into the ground, and while the people were searching all about for him a large flat boulder suddenly came up through the floor, cracked in two, and ejected the knife on one side, and the shaman on the other. The man was rather dazed from his experience, but the shamans soon made him right again. Reminiscent of a well-known conjuring trick was a feat of Ilatsiak's , who drove a knife into the back wall of his hut, then stood out in the middle of the floor, removed his coat and picked up his knife from the ground at his feet. Another shaman took it and threw it out into the passage, making it come in again through the window. All these events took place in Bathurst inlet, where the shamans are reputed to have much more skill than those farther west. It was in the same region that some people threw their knives into the water through a hole in the ice, and the shamans made them float on the surface. Then they threw in their ice-chisels, and the shamans brought

them to the top also. (1) The Hudson bay native Kaksavik was overheard telling Uloksak how he once laid some matches on the ice and told them to fly to a settlement where the people were in need of them. His familiars then carried them away, and the natives found them near their huts.

Some natives were once mocking a Bathurst inlet shaman named Pannaktok, saying that he had no real power. He took off one of his mittens and laid it on the floor; presently it stood up on end and changed to a tiny man, who turned around and gazed on all the audience. Pannaktok stooped down and picked it up, and it changed to a mitten again. Then he laid both his mittens on the palms of his hands and held them out toward the spectators. First they changed to polar bear's claws, then two tiny bears jumped down and began to scratch on the floor; again they changed to mittens when he picked them up.

This same Pannaktok, according to native accounts, told a man to stand upright against the wall of the dance-house, then drove his seal-spear right through his chest and threw the weapon to the back of the hut. The natives had to hold the man up to keep

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"1. Cf. Stefansson, Anthrop. Papers, A.M.H.N., [sic] Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 293, and My Life with the Eskimo, p. 180."

him from falling. The shaman then made the spear return through his chest, leaving the man whole and unharmed. On the last day of 1915 three shamans, Koeha, Agluak and Anauyuk, held a seance in Dolphin and Union strait to dispel the baneful influence of some malicious shades. Agluak breathed on his hand and struck three of the spectators on the chests. They fell to the ground dead, but he took them by the hands and they came to life again. I did not witness this performance myself, but heard about it the following day. [200]

Uloksak described a seance at Bathurst inlet in which he had taken part. A woman, stripped to the waist, swallowed a snow knife till only the handle projected from her mouth. Another shaman took hold of it and pulled it out of her stomach. A third shaman, a native of Ekaluktok, then swallowed a mitten and made it come out of Uloksak's stomach, whereupon Uloksak himself swallowed it and made it come out of the stomach of a man named Manneratsiak. Manneratsiak immediately went outside, and when he entered the dance-house again all the upper half of his body had changed to a musk-ox while the lower parts remained human. In this state he walked about the dance-house for a little while, then went outside again and returned in his proper form. Meanwhile a woman named Allanak was looking after her hut some distance from the scene of these marvels. The shamans threw a line out into the passage of the dance-house, and began to haul it in again; the spectators then saw that the end was fastened around Allanak's

neck. The women herself knew nothing about it until she was told some time afterwards.

Kuniluk, a Puivlik shaman, professed to have changed to a white man on one occasion. He was crossing Dolphin and Union strait, he said, on his way to our station, when a fog came up and he lost his way. He summoned one of his familiars, which changed him temporarily into a white man and enabled him to find his way again without any difficulty.

Many a shaman lays claim to clairvoyance. In the spring of 1915 when a number of Eskimos were encamped beside our station this same man Kuniluk was accused by Uloksak of stealing two boxes of cartridges. After Kuniluk had left the camp Uloksak entered the station and announced that he intended to recover one of the boxes. He rolled up his sleeves like a conjuror, waved his arms about in the air, rolled his eyes, and finally, diving down into a dark corner of the room, brought forth a box. The trick was rather too transparent, for plainly he had left the box there earlier in the day. Our cook immediately accepted the challenge, and, knowing of another box that lay in a corner out of sight, he went through a similar performance and 'discovered' it. Uloksak was astounded, and could not make up his mind whether the cook's 'discovery' was a genuine one or simply a fraud like his own.

In December, 1915, a woman shaman prophesied that some people to the eastward

would fall over a cliff into a hole and perish. During the same performance she announced that evil spirits were threatening the lives of certain natives in the community. One of them was Avranna, so she forbade his wife Milukkattak to sew on the following day. Milukkattak had promised to make a sleeping bag for me, but in consequence of this prohibition she had to postpone it.

Many of the shamans' 'discoveries' are made in dreams. Two fox-traps were once stolen from my sled; Higilak told me a few days later that in her sleep she had seen a hand and fore-arm stealthily abstracting them, but could not identify the person. On another occasion I lost a tin full of matches, and a shaman discovered in a dream that a certain woman had stolen them. Ilatsiak asserted that his familiar often visited him in his sleep and revealed what was about to happen. Whenever he dreamed of small knives he knew that some children were sick. Sometimes the knives lay broken on the ground and he would rivet them together; then the children would grow well again. One morning he heard that a little boy, the son of a Mackenzie river woman in our service, had taken suddenly ill; immediately he announced that during his sleep he had repaired a knife that lay broken on the snow, so the boy would recover. The very next morning he entered our house and reported that during the night his spirit had told him that something had gone wrong on our schooner; it was the thing, he said, that made the vessel move. We thought that he must mean the propeller, for we had put a new one on during

the winter and had to keep the ice open around it. By a strange coincidence, however, we discovered [201] during the day --what Ilatsiak could hardly have been aware of -- that a boom we were using to roof our provision cache had snapped during the night owing to the weight of the snow above it. Two days later Ilatsiak announced again that in his dream he had seen a sled falling over a cliff, and expressed the hope that none of our sleds would meet with such a mishap during the spring.

These stories of shamanistic seances and miracles are from hearsay only, but Mr. Wilkins, our photographer, personally participated in a performance at the fishing creek near Bernard harbour. His interpreter for the occasion was the half-breed Patsy Klengenberg, and the account he gives is as follows:--

'On another occasion I visited a camp and there had veen very few fish caught for the last two or three days. They had all waited all that day and there had not been a sign of any fish making a run. About nine o'clock at night they thought they should hold a seance to try and induce a few to come along, for although they had a quantity of dried fish they did not care to use that up. A fellow called Igluhuk had arrived at the camp that evening and he had the reputation of being a great shaman. We were all standing about outside watching for signs of a run when one of the men asked me if I would help in a seance to try to make the fish come up the creek. I agreed to do my best,' and they all crowded into the largest tent in the village. I was given a seat next to the shaman

which had been reserved for me, although I was almost the last to come in, and there was not room for any others to sit down after and some of them had to lean in and look through the door. At first it seemed as if they had forgotten their object, for the conversation was general and was mainly about the fishing at other seasons and on other days and at other creeks that season. After about thirty minutes of this, the shaman seemed to be doing most of the talking and gradually everyone else remained quiet.

'He seemed to be warming to his subject and would at intervals demand corroboration from one or other of the audience. Presently he started off in a kind of sing-song and the audience chatted to each other in whispers or nodded to each other across the tent. At intervals the shaman would address somebody in a language that they could not understand, and they would turn inquiringly to someone else for an explanation, but none would be forthcoming; no one seemed to know what it was that was asked. Then two or three would ask if it was so-and-so that was meant, or suggest something else, but the shaman would shake his head violently and repeat the question in the unknown jargon. After several fruitless attempts to make himself understood, and when the brows of the audience were wrinkled with thought, and most of them were bewildered in their efforts to understand, the old man gave a shout and clapped his hands to his forehead. Shutting his eyes, he started swaying backwards and forwards. He kept up the monotonous sing-song of an un-understandable sound for about an hour, while the other people talked

intermittently about several things, sometimes looking at the performer and shaking their heads and whispering to each other. Presently the shaman gave a shout and uttered some intelligible sounds and I was requested to hold on to his hand.

'An old woman sitting next but one to him searched around and found the copper head of an ice spear, and while I held his hand on one side and the owner of the tent held his shoulder on the other, she gave him a smart tap on the left side of the head with a lump of copper. At this he released his hand from his forehead and opened his eyes. Huge drops of perspiration stood out all over his face and his eyes were wild and bloodshot. We released our hold and he kept his backward and forward swaying motion but with renewed vigour. He was now talking intelligible language, but so fast that most of the people in the audience could not understand him and they would repeatedly shout questions to him or ask him to repeat things. He took no notice of them and soon began to point to one or the other of the audience and, fluttering his fingers [202] to indicate that the fish were swarming in the river, would prophesy that such and such a person would catch a number of fish.

'He kept this up for about half an hour, pointing mostly to two or three people who were, by the way, always successful in the contests when there were any fish to be caught. The whole performance had now lasted about three hours, and during that time no one had been keeping a look-out on the creek for fish, except perhaps the

children who had been playing about outside. They paid an occasional visit to the door of the tent but did not stay long, as they were evidently not interested in the old man's performance. The shaman's movements began to become normal at last, and although he was still frothing at the mouth, his questions and exclamations became less frequent and finally subsided altogether. There was now a hurried whispered consultation amongst the audience, and the old woman took a copper spear-head and gave the old fellow a smart tap on the right side of the head, and he looked round the audience in a dazed sort of way, as if he had just come out of a hypnotic trance. One of the men near the door gave a shout and, jumping up, ran for his spear and towards the creek, with the others following as fast as they could. None of them were prepared for fishing in the ordinary way by having taken off some of their clothes or put on long water-boots, and as they ran towards the creek, some of them slipped off what clothes they could, while others rushed for the water in what they were dressed in. It was apparent at first sight that there were a number of fish in the trap, and within a few minutes they had caught sixty, a big haul in ordinary times, and now an extraordinary one for it had seemed that the fish had stopped running the day before. Whether the old man's performance had anything to do with it or not the Eskimos fully believed that it had; but I am rather inclined to think that the success was due to the fact that while they were listening to the shaman they were not outside making a noise and frightening the fish

from coming into the trap, and that during the three hours' seance a number of stragglers had collected in the trap.

'The Eskimos were overjoyed at the success. The ones that the shaman had pointed out had surely caught the most fish, but then they always did when there were any fish to be caught. The man who had caught the most, and in whose house the seance had been held, after making a display of his catch to the people, cut a section from between the ventral fins of the largest fish and gave it to the shaman. He then cut a similar section from the next biggest and gave it to me. As these sections were only about an inch long and half an inch wide and as thick, and I noticed the shaman had swallowed his, I did likewise, to the evident satisfaction of the people. The only explanation of this that I could gather through the interpreter was that it was a present for making the fish come into the trap.'

In regard to this seance the interpreter, Patsy --who, by the way, was thoroughly sceptical of all Eskimo shamanism -- told me that Igluhuk (or Iglisiak as he should be called) had prophesied that a certain boy Hogaluk would capture three fish, and that Patsy himself would get only two. In both cases his prophesy proved true."

1: Jenness--209-213 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 787

"The greatest of all the shamans among the Copper Eskimos was Ilatsiak. In March, 1916, he guided a large band of Bathurst inlet natives to our station at Bernard harbour and camped beside us for about three weeks. Seeing us record one or two songs on the phonograph he asked to be allowed to summon his familiar spirit, Kingaudlik, and under its inspiration to speak into the machine. He was rather short of stature, so we had to raise him on a box to bring his face level with the horn; perched on this box he protruded his face into the bell of the horn and nervously kicked his legs out behind him, one after the other, in the manner of a person skipping over a rope. The usual preliminaries of a shamanistic performance were omitted; he merely paused a moment to collect his wits (or to give his familiar time to enter him), then said what he had to say and stood down. Some of the words are scarcely audible in the record owing to his jumping. As usual too, it is difficult to attach any meaning to them, but the literal interpretation of this first oracle was, 'Where? Give me liver, liver; it is excellent. I hear speech' --a remark that Ilatsiak's adopted son understood to mean that his father's familiar Kingaudlik was asking for some liver.

This seance not being very satisfactory, Ilatsiak was requested to give another similar to those he habitually gave in the dance-house. When everything was ready he came forward and asked for a cup of water. He gazed into it very intently for a few seconds, then said that something was wrong on our schooner; some one on board was going to be

drowned. He then drank the water, solemnly shook hands with all the white men present, stepped up to the phonograph and, at the word takki, 'Begin', delivered the oracle that is translated below. Mingled with his words are the remarks of his Eskimo kinsmen, especially of his wife, whose voice, though she sat quite six feet away from the machine, can be heard quite distinctly on the record; for the natives regarded the seance as a perfectly genuine one, and tried to interpret Ilatsiak's utterances, and enlarge on them, just as they would have done in the dance-house. Ilatsiak gave a gasp at the conclusion and breathed very hard for a moment or two as his familiar left him, after which he sat down and enquired of the natives what he had said. Later in the day he invoked another of his familiars, Annakok, and we recorded yet another oracle.

It was not considered advisable to allow Ilatsiak to hear his own records, but after he had returned east two natives from the same region who had heard the oracles delivered helped me to reduce them to writing and to translate them into English. In many places the words were quite unintelligible even to them, for, as they took pains to remark, it was not the shaman himself who was speaking but the spirit that possessed him, and spirit utterances are not easily understood by the laity. Neither seance was in any way fictitious, either to Ilatsiak himself or to his audience. Even the Eskimos who heard the records only discussed them as real oracles, and had implicit faith in their verity.

The first oracle was as follows: --

'. . . . Did you do it? Did you do it? It is terrifying. Himiamin, (1) did you do it? The fish's eyes, the fish, they say. Did you do it? The fish, they say, ate the people. It is terrifying. The fish ate the people, it swallowed [210] them they say; people afar off, it destroyed them all, they say. People here, the fish, the salmon, the thing that moves them, it is going to eat them, it is dangerous. These people unhappily it ate, it ate; those unhappily it terrifies; these people, dangerous, these, unhappily, the fish, these, it is going to eat them down there. Ukumarauta's shade, it seized him, him, out over the sea, Ukumarauta, the big island, intending to eat him, its shade, out over the sea, seized him.'

(Here there are some indistinct words in the record, the comments of Ilatsiak's wife in the background. Ilatsiak continues:--)

'These people, these people, yes. How is it? These people, it seized out over the sea.'

"1. Himiamin was said to be the name of a woman shaman in Bathurst inlet."

(Again there are constant interruptions by the audience, and Ilatsiak continues:--)

'Yes, Ukumarauta, the people, it, the fish, it seized, seized, it, the fish. The dogs, the dogs, these, these people, these, these people, their kinsfolk, those away over there, the Indians too, it kills with its heavy weight, it eats them, destroying them without difficulty. Yes, it seized, it seized that one, it seized, it seized, yes. But I speaking plainly I think I am.'

(At this point the voice of his wife is distinctly audible, saying, 'Speak plainly, speak out.')

'Yes, from the sea, the salt sea, it seized, hu, hu, yes, they are going to eat, yes, next summer, they are going to eat, hu, hu, hu.'

Only the general drift of the meaning is distinguishable from these broken utterances. With regard to the first part the natives explained that there is a huge salmon, as large as an island, which swallowed two kayaks once with their occupants, and almost devoured two others at the same time. This was in a lake somewhere beyond Bathurst inlet where the Eskimos secure caribou, not with bows and arrows, but with pit-falls. The salmon is frightened and hides when the shamans hold a seance and talk about it. [211]

The passage about Ukumarauta refers to a large stone of that name in a country to

which the daylight never reaches. The stone is sometimes called the 'Big Island,' sometimes 'The Heavy One,' ukumaura. Occasionally a shaman will summon it to come and have a feast; then it falls unseen from the sky and kills many people with rocks, and other shamans (Higilak was instanced as an example) have to drive it back again. A shaman too will sometimes make it drop on an approaching kayaker and kill him, though it is sometimes affirmed that the magic stone uses a small spear to kill its victims. The stone can sing like a man, and the shamans have a special incantation or invocation, akeun, for it, but my informants did not know the words. A Bathurst inlet shaman, the Pannaktok who has been mentioned already, uses the stone for one of his familiars. In the present oracle the stone proposed to 'eat' the expedition when it left Bernard harbour. The final portion of the record is a protestation by the familiar that it is speaking only the truth.

The second oracle that Ilatsiak delivered was equally obscure. The first part of it had reference to the thefts that some of the local natives had perpetrated on us during the period of Ilatsiak's visit. Then he spoke of his joy at my promise to pay him liberally for relating some of the old traditions of his people. The last portion referred to a great fish that had swallowed a ship, and would swallow our schooner also unless our magic was strong enough to prevail against it. The oracle concluded, like the previous one, with an asseveration by the familiar that it spoke nothing but the truth. Ilat-

siak was about to step down after this performance when he suddenly recollected (or so it seemed to us) that he had omitted the usual gasps and grunts when his familiar left him; accordingly he turned back to the phonograph and finished in the orthodox manner. (1)

In all these seances, except those of Uloksak and Higilak, my own limited knowledge of the language was supplemented by the services of an interpreter, either the Mackenzie river native, Palaiyak, or the half-breed Patsy Klengenberg. In every case the familiar spirit was supposed to have entered the body of the shaman and to have used the man as its medium. But there is an altogether different type of seance, divination by lifting, (2) of which I have already given one example. I saw only one shaman, Higilak, employ this method, and never had an interpreter at any of her performances. My knowledge of the ordinary conversational language was very imperfect, and shamans in

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"1. Cf. Boas, Bulletin A. M. N. H., Vol. XV., p. 156 et seq.; Stefansson, 'My Life with the Eskimo,' p. 291 et seq."

"2. Cf. Crantz, Vol. I, p. 210 et seq., 214; Boas, Bulletin A. M. N. H., Vol. XV, pp. 135, 512; Stefansson, Anthrop. Papers, A. M. N. H., Vol. XIV, pt. I, p. 360 et seq."

their seances make use of old or semi-poetical expressions that greatly increase the difficulty of understanding them; a seal, for example, may be referred to as 'the thing that has blubber.' For my interpretations in this class of seances therefore I had to depend rather on my own observations at the time and the subsequent explanations of the spectators or of Higilak herself. It is not at all impossible that I may have missed the correct interpretation in some instances, but by describing a number of these seances a fairly correct idea can perhaps be gleaned of the religious notions that lie behind them. All except the last one took place on Victoria island during the summer of 1915.

On May 9, all the adults of our party gathered in Ikpakhuak's tent a little before midnight. Ikpakhuak himself was sitting at the back of the sleeping platform, with Higilak in front, while I sat opposite her at the outer end of the platform. Higilak rolled her coat into a bundle, made a running noose of her belt, and slipped it around the head of the coat. The loose end of the cord, with its toggle, she kept in her left hand, while the four fingers of her right hand rested on the coat under the noose, and the thumb on top of it. Her familiar spirit, in this case her atatsiak (mother's father ?), was summoned [212] into the bundle, and made its presence known by the increase in weight when Higilak tried to lift it. Both Higilak and the spectators then asked it various questions, and the answer 'Yes' or 'No' resulted according as she found it heavy

or light; if the bundle was heavy the answer was 'Yes,' if light, 'No.' Once Kesullik wanted to test it after Higilak had said that it was heavy, but she would not let him. She yawned several times during the performance, and once or twice the conversation drifted off on to other topic s, but no one seemed to be credulous of the answers that were given. As far as I could gather their questions were all concerned with the prospects of securing an abundance of fish and c aribou during the next few months. A coat when tied up and used for this ceremony is given the special name of kila.

On May 26th Higilak questioned the kila again, this time to discover whether any Prince Albert sound natives would visit our camp at Lake Tahiryuak. The ceremony took place out of doors, because the air was warm and our little tent was too small to hold all the audience. The kila affirmed that they would come to us, but I gathered that Higilak was not altogether satisfied with the reply, for the next morning when no one was near she asked the same question of me. Two days later she borrowed my two coats (the outer and inner attigi), and divined again. I was told to say to the bundle that being a 'white' man it was to be heavy for an affirmative answer and light for a negative. (This was contrary to the usual regulations.) Higilak and the audience then asked it one question after another, and at each one she tested its weight. I noticed that whenever the kila was light she drew it straight up, but whenever it was heavy she gave a slight twist to her hand so that the back of it was pressing down on the bundle while the fingers

and wrist were ostensibly trying to raise it. I gathered that the spirit in the kila on this occasion was one of my familiars, not one of Higilak's.

The following evening, not seeing Ikpakhuak in the camp, I asked Kanneyuk whether he were fishing on the lake; at least that was the question I intended to ask her, but through a slight grammatical error what I actually said was 'Has he caught a fish?' It so happened that about that time Ikpakhuak did catch a large trout at a fishing-hole a few hundred yards away. Some of the natives therefore thought that I must possess second-sight, and wanted to know whether the Prince Albert sound natives were not already on their way to visit us. Even Ikpakhuak, when he returned a little while afterwards, supported their request that I should allow Higilak to tie a cord round my head or my foot and divine, as with the kila, by lifting it and testing its weight; however, when evening came, she used my coat instead. In the meantime Kesullik pretended to hold a seance on his own account; he asked various questions of an old tobacco can, rapping it with a stick for 'yes' and not rapping it at all for 'no'.

Higilak held an interesting performance when we were returning from Lake Tahiryuak to Lake Numikhoin. The immediate cause was a sudden, apparently spontaneous, bark from one of my dogs. The Eskimos had been much concerned about it, fearing that it foreboded someone's death, and Milukkattak had asked me whether the dog tornraktok, i.e., was acting as a medium for its familiar spirit. (Even a dog, it seems,

may have its familiars). (1) Higilak therefore borrowed my coat after I had turned into my sleeping-bag, and, making a kila of it, began to ask it questions. First she demanded, 'Is there anyone in it?', and after a minute or two the kila became heavy --a spirit had entered. Through a series of questions she elucidated the fact that one of us was in danger of death, and after testing two or three names it was finally fixed on Tusayok. Higilak now addressed herself to me and asked whether Tusayok had been successful or not in his fishing, for he had remained behind at Lake Numikhoin a fortnight before when the remainder of the party went on to Lake Tahiryuak. I said, 'Probably not,' on the presumption that as [213] we had all been rather unsuccessful before we left Lake Numikhoin, so Tusayok afterwards would probably have met with little better luck. This appeared to be the answer she wanted. She then said that a man had entered the kila and asked me whether I saw him, but I tried to avoid the question and asked her instead if she had. She said 'No, I was the only person who had', an assertion she made on her own account, or possibly judging by some expression on my face. Next she asked whether it was a white man, and I told her to question it; the answer was 'yes.' One or two other questions were addressed to it, then she turned to me again and asked

"1. Cf. Stefansson, Anthrop. Papers, A.M.N.H., Vol.XIV, pt.I, p. 342."

whether the 'man' had not gone out of the kila; when I said, 'There is no one in it' she requested me to put him back in again. I told her to continue her divining, and the kila immediately became heavy again -- 'the man' had re-entered. She now wanted to know whether it was a kinsman of mine, and I told her it was not. Again she questioned it about our fortunes, and the answer, as she finally announced it to us, was, 'He is going to be friendly towards the people.' After addressing a few more remarks to the kila, the meaning of which I could not follow, she found that it had become light again, indicating that the 'man' had left it. Accordingly, after requesting my permission, she removed her belt from round it and terminated the ceremony. The theory of the natives seemed to be that as it was my dog that had barked -- the dog of a white man -- it must be a white man's shade that was trying to do them harm, and I should be able to help them to deal with it; further, that the man, or rather the shade that was conceived to enter the kila, if not a familiar spirit of mine, was yet to some extent at least under my control. It was for this reason that Higilak had sought my cooperation."

3: Rasmussen--27 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 791, 868

"A would-be shaman must be made suitable right from birth. Even as soon as the afterbirth has been extruded the infant is lifted up and allowed to look through it, a ceremony that gives the child second sight. Later on such children are called: taRak'ut ihilgit, i. e. those who have eyes in the dark. Later on, when they are grown up, they do various tricks as proof of the powers they have received through their special initiation. Meat or liver, for instance, which they had eaten would sometimes not pass the usual channels through the rectum, but came out through the navel, masticated but not digested. In such cases the audience was allowed to pick the pieces of chewed meat from the trouser band beside the navel.

The child who was chosen and wedded to the shaman's art soon became haunted by dreams. The dreams had always to be revealed to the people of the village, and were then interpreted as particular and strange omens; and it was on these dreams that the shamans built up their special knowledge of all those things that are hidden to ordinary people. The explanation of it all was 'These children, who were to have visions in the wastes, where there were no people, the shamans used to busy themselves with in order to teach them; for the helping spirits, who were the spirits of the air, often went back into the sky again'. By this was meant that it was always hard to get helping spirits that would remain, as very often they would return to the skies without taking up residence in the breast of the shamans."

3: Rasmussen--27-28 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 791

"A shaman is also called: i.e. 'one who has eyes', and his helping spirits nakɔrutit. In contrast to the shamans ordinary people are called inuin'ait. Shaman disciples: had never to eat the brains of seals or seal foetus, for if they did they would lose their power of seeing. These things were laid at ijErihat's door: 'forbidden things, from which a shaman should abstain.' [28]

The spirits of the air, they said, saw the shamans in the form of shining bodies that attracted and drew them and made them wish to go and live in them and give them their own strength, sight and knowledge. When such a spirit beset a shaman it went in by the navel and found a place in the breast cavity, whence it inspired him. Compared with the shining shamans ordinary people are like houses with extinguished lamps: they are dark inside and do not attract the attention of the spirits.

Shamans, they said, got their helping spirits from the following places: the earth's surface, the earth's inside, out from space; out from the borders between earth and the sky."

3: Rasmussen--28 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 756, 791

"The functions of shamans were:

To cure the sick.

When a person became ill and could not get well again, a present was taken to a shaman, preferably some costly object like a dog, a sledge, a gun or a knife. It was then his duty to hold a seance in the house of the sick. in order to clear up the cause of the illness. If only the cause of the ailment were discovered it was usually considered to be synonymous with a cure. In most cases the cause was evil spirits, which for some reason or other had attacked the person, or it may have been a breach of taboo."

3: Rasmussen--28-29 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 789, 791, 821

"[MPK: The functions of the shaman were:] To propitiate storms and bad weather.

In the case of a long period of bad weather, especially in winter when snow storms put a stop to hunting of all kinds, the shamans would act as subduers of the weather. This was the way it was done: the people gathered in the qag^{s}je, after which one or two shamans ran out into the open air with their upper bodies bare except for a head-band made of the long breast hair of the caribou. The cause of continuous bad weather with blizzards was that the weather's opening, had been left ajar, and through the opening streamed the storm; when the shamans run up against the wind, naked as they are, it is their task to close up the hole in hila. [MPK: the weather] This is often done with the aid of helping spirits, and then the weather's opening has to be bound up with the shaman's head-band. As soon as this is done the storm will cease.

It will be noticed that among the Umingmaktôrmiut there is constant reference to the weather's opening, just as if it were something [29] that could be opened and closed from space -- an entrance hole or the like. Among the other groups that have previously been described it is the usual belief that the spirit of hila is personified in the infant, who lives out in space. When the child's napkin loosens the wind begins to blow, and therefore the shaman has to go up and put it right."

3: Rasmussen--29 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 789, 791

"[MPK: The functions of the shaman were:]

To attack and kill evil spirits.

It sometimes happens that a village is attacked by evil spirits that have come out of graves. Of these evil spirits, it is said that they are the souls of the dead, which turn wicked with age. These evil spirits can be killed by a shaman either in the qag°je itself or out in the entrance passage. As a rule this is done with a snow-beater, which for this purpose must always be of hard wood, in contrast to orpiqAq, which is of willow. Armed with this snow-beater the shaman fights with the spirits -- invisible as they are to ordinary people, with the result that the snow-beater becomes covered with blood. Especially skilful shamans can also fight them with their bare fists."

"[MPK: The functions of the shaman were:]

To procure animals for hunting.

This can be done by means of a very simple seance, in which the shaman merely gives the people of the village an opportunity to confess the various taboos they have broken. It is not always necessary to call [MPK: Sea Woman] up to the snow hut.

In addition to these public obligations, every shaman is fond of demonstrating his powers by doing tricks. One favourite trick is to hold a seal thong in the hand in the qag^{s}je and let it be severed before the eyes of everybody there; after many mysterious manipulations the thong is then shown to be whole and uncut.

I have myself seen this trick performed on many occasions, and noticed that besides the whole thong, the shaman had a short line of just the same thickness and appearance. It was this line that he allowed someone in the qag^{s}je to cut, and, while working to make it whole again it was never difficult to conceal the severed piece in his clothing.

There are many ways of proving that one is in communication with helping spirits. It is a very common thing that when a thong is thrown from the inside of the qag^{s}je out through the passage, it is seized by one or more spirits outside. As soon as the line is taut the [30] shaman gets people inside to haul on to the other end of it, and sometimes the spirits show that their strength is enormous.

Another favourite trick is to hold a mitten on the end of a snow beater out into the

passage and, when the beater is withdrawn, the mitten is no longer there. If it is stuck out again, the mitten reappears on it.

During one of these demonstrations at which I was present, one of the members of my expedition came unexpectedly into the passage where the spirits were supposed to be, and there he saw two men -- the shaman's assistants -- hastily conceal themselves in an offshoot from the passage."

3: Rasmussen--30-31 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo-1-3
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"At Malerualik I had the opportunity of seeing a number of seances with shamans. They were all extremely naive and easily seen through if one watched at all critically. I was mostly impressed by the manner in which the shamans tried to get into touch with their helping spirits. Qagtaq, for instance, often shamanized in a snow hut lying next door to ours. While people sat expectantly inside the hut, tense with the uncanniness of the scene and gripped by the mysteriousness of the unknown, Qagtaq was wandering about half naked in the snow-storm outside for the purpose of getting inspiration; sometimes he would lie in a snow drift, and half naked as he was, he naturally soon got into a miserable condition. After a little while he would go into the snow hut, shivering and wretched; he was then in a state of great excitement, looked round in a bewildered manner, and then started to tell about his visions out there in the snow-storm, speaking in riddles and often entirely incomprehensibly, in a high, shrill falsetto. All one could understand was that he had seen both dead and spirits. His sentences were interrupted by wild howls, and old women, stretching their imagination to the utmost, tried to reconstruct their meaning. The women, who had had much experience of shamanizing, drew upon a very lively fantasy, and all their suggested interpretations of Qagtaq's mystic oracular words finally built up so much material to work upon, that at last it was possible to construct an account of what it was the spirits had said through the shaman. Thus it was more a reconstruction based upon guesswork than an actual announcement.

One young woman, Taiphuina, who seemed to be very intelligent, had once been a shaman disciple buy had given it up, as she 'could not lie well enough'. The shamans sought in vain to encourage her, saying 'Once you start trying, and people are listening, you can almost always hit upon something.' But it was all of no use.

Taiphuina's candid admission, given in answer to some questions I put to her, aroused great merriment among the people, where there [31] were several shamans -- in fact it was they who laughed heartiest; for they knew that people were so enthralled by all that is incomprehensible between earth and sky that nothing could shake the faith of their audience when a real seance was going on, no matter what was said.

All the seances I attended while with the Umingmaktôrmiut were extremely naive in tendency and performance. I was only at Agiaq that, during the course of a protracted snow storm, I was present at a seance that was so well thought out and performed that it really made an impression upon me. Otherwise during all seances and demonstrations the audience is credited with almost fabulous faith in the trustworthiness of the shaman and the actual presence of the spirits; to those who did not share this faith it was impossible to retain the illusion that it was higher powers that were signifying their existence. In addition, their conjuring tricks were so childish and so perfectly easy to see through that the critical looker-on could only feel astonishment that they could be taken seriously at all. It is only the psyche of the shaman and his audience that prevent the whole show from being reduced to humbug and deceit. And of this there is no question.

3: Rasmussen--30-31 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo-3
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For the shamans themselves consider their various tricks to be means that bring them in touch with the spirits. The relationship between the natural and the supernatural is in itself so problematic that it is of no consequence if there is some 'cheating' in the ritual during an invocation."